PITTSBURGH
FAN FORUM
JULY '76
GABRIELE

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CLUB BUSINESS:

Next Meeting: The Pittsburgh Comix Club next meets on Saturday, August 14, at 6:30 PM at Greg Eide's shop, 636 Butler St., Rt. 8, Etna. This will be our August Anniversary meeting (the club is four years old!) where we'll be voting on the proposed club constitution included in this issue. The next meeting will be on September 11, same time and place!

July Con Report: The PCC's eight convention attendees recently got back from Phil Seuling's Comic Art Convention in New York. We made our usual spectacular show their-- first, we defeated the Marvel softball team by the embarrassing score of 14-12, then, our own Keith Matteson won first prize in the costume competition ($100 bucks, folks!) with his Nightcrawler ensemble! Mark Lerer spent an hour interviewing Steve Gerber (the transcript of which will appear in these pages soon), and a good time was had by all.

August Anniversary: The next meeting is the absolute and final deadline for your contributions to our ANNIVERSARY EDITION. If you haven't already, write or draw at least one page of material, make 100 copies of it, and mail 'em in to Ben! Now! We want 100% club participation this year!

Miscellany: If you're wondering about the new typeface we're using this issue, stop! Our esteemed editor is using a new typewriter. Tell him if you like this new look, or want the old one back. He loves to get mail. On the topic of PFF, we'd like to apologize here and now if last issue had a page upside-down. We're far from perfect...!

Goodbye and Good Luck: Here's an "au revoir" to Lou Pascazi, who leaves the Pittsburgh Area this month. The fellow's off into the wilds of the midwest for the next step on the way to his eventual priesthood! During the time he was a regular resident member, Lou served the club often selflessly, putting as many hours and dollars and quarts of sweat and blood into club projects as anyone could have. Our two PITTCONs serve as testimony to this member's planning and dedication, as well as our radio shows, our Hillman Library Exhibit, et al. We'll miss you Lou-- and don't forget to write!

Plug: We're plugging this issue the New NOSTALGIA JOURNAL, which has undergone some changes in format and content. Now under the control of oldtimer Gary Groth, we highly recommend "The collector's guide to comics, science fiction, fantasy, and art." Subscriptions are $1.00 for six issues to TNJ / Box 292 / Riverdale, Md. 20840. On the subject of endorsements, PFF is proud to state that we are backing Howard The Duck for President in 1976, and that we're in touch with HTD campaign manager Steve Gerber. Get down, America!

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All right! We give up! Pittsburgh Fan Forum is giving in!

We're doing a

BICENTENNIAL issue!!!

Proposed P.C.C. Constitution

ARTICLE I

The name of this organization shall be The Pittsburgh Comix Club.

ARTICLE II

The purpose of this club shall be to have fun furthering comics.

ARTICLE III

All fees must be approved by a majority vote, a quorum being present, at a regularly scheduled club meeting, and must be published in the club publication, Pittsburgh Fan Forum.

ARTICLE IV

Membership

Section A: Resident members shall be members of the club living within the greater Pittsburgh area.
Corresponding members shall be members of the club living outside the greater Pittsburgh area.
Honorary members shall be persons who have aided the club and its projects, and are deemed worthy of the honor by the membership.

Section B: All members except honorary members shall have full voting rights.

Section C: All members except honorary members shall be expected to contribute material to the annual Anniversary Edition which appears in August.

Section D: All resident members shall be members of the Convention Committee.

ARTICLE V

Officers

Section A: The officers of the club shall be the President, Vice-President, and Secretary-Treasurer.

Scetion B: The President shall preside over all club meetings; appoint, with the approval of the membership, other officers; appoint committee chairmen; serve as publisher of Pittsburgh Fan Forum; and carry out whatever duties are necessary and proper to fulfill his or her obligation to the club.

Section C: The Vice-President shall preside over meetings which the President does not attend; serve as editor of Pittsburgh Fan Forum; and carry out whatever duties are necessary and proper to fulfill his or her obligation to the club.

Section D: The Secretary Treasurer shall maintain all records of club finances and financial transactions; preside over meetings which neither the President nor the Vice President attend; and carry out whatever duties are necssary and proper to fulfill his or her obligation to the club.

Section E: The President may, with the approval of the majority of the membership, choose not to appoint any of the other officers or change their duties.

Section F: The terms of the Vice-President and Sec.-Treasurer shall each be one year, beginning with the August of each year.

Regional Federation: As you may know, the PCC, and comics groups from Ashtabula, Erie, Youngstown, Ohio, and others have been participating in joint meetings and will continue to do so on a regular basis. The purpose here is not only to articulate between clubs and help serve one another's needs, but eventually we're interested in forming a sort of federation of comic book fan clubs. The purposes of such a federation could be not only numerous but very important to fandom in general. For examples, such a group could help schedule and coordinate cons across the country, serve as a "watchdog" for dealers, gather clout in boycotting undesirable fans and fandom institutions (we won't mention any names, but we're sure you have an idea of who we mean), and the like.

The next meeting of the several clubs will be in Erie on July 25, and then again in Erie on August 8. The August 8 meeting will be a combination trading session, outdoor barbecue, and general fan get-together. There would be a small fee if you want to attend the August 8 outdoor session (for food, group transportation, and such), but we feel it's well worth it! If you're interested in attending, call Ben for details, or David Prattg / 5086 Station Rd. / Erie, Pa. 16510, phone 814-899-5894. Our previous two meetings (in Ashtabula and Erie) have been very successful and have featured a few dealers, films, and socializing. Hopefully, we can generate enough support to formalize such a coalition between clubs, with meeting places on a rotating basis.

PITTCON '77 Planning: Ah, yes, it's time again to plan Pittsburgh's annual comic con. You'll find a sheet of paper mailed with this issue for you to fill out (this is very important) and send in to Ben or bring to the next meeting, asking what type of con you'd like PITTCON '77 to be.

Meanwhile, club accountant Bill Englebert has compiled a proposed budget for PITTCON '77, listing costs and cost increases over last year. Notice that about $1800 must be raised before we can have such a con, and we're soliciting funds either by having everyone contribute $4.00 a month toward PITTCON, or having everyone participate in fund raising events and projects. The choice is yours. If you cannot help in cash, we expect you to generate profit through your giving time. Some budget cuts may be possible:

PITTCON COSTS

	1976 Actual	1977 Projected	Increase
Transportation	$450	$450	$-0-
Advertising	170	200	30
Printing costs	645	700	55
Films	70	350	280
Hotel	300	400	100
Fees to guests	125	200	75
Name tags	40	75	35
total	$1800	$2375	$575

All club fund raising project suggestions are asked for, and such projects will be announced here every issue. If we can raise $600 dollars or so before the year is out, we'll be well on our way to having aPITTCON '77.

* * *

ARTICLE IX

The use of the club name, emblems, or any such material for any purposes but club projects or activities must be approved in writing by three officers and recorded in Pittsburgh Fan Forum.

ARTICLE X

Section A: Violation of the club constitution shall be reason for removal of an officer from his office.

Section B: Any accusation of such a violation must be made in writing and announced during a regular club meeting. The membership shall at that time decide on a method of investigation of allegations and removal of the officer from office. A majority vote of the membership shall be necessary to remove any officer from office. All such actions shall be published in Pittsburgh Fan Forum.

ARTICLE XI

Procedure for admentment of the club constiution shall be as follows: the written amendment shall be presented to the membership at a regular meeting. If approved by the membership by a majority vote, the amendment shall be published in Pittsburgh Fan Forum with a ballot. A majority vote of the voting membership by ballot shall be required to pass the amendment.

* * *

We will be voting on this proposed constitution at the August meeting. If you cannot attend the August meeting, please fill out the ballot below (or use a duplicate if you don't want to butcher up this copy of PFF!) and mail it in to Ben Pondexter. If a majority of the voting membership approve this draft, it shall go into effect as our club constitution.

Ballot

I vote _____ on this proposed constitution.
(yes/no)

Name_____

Address_____

Any proposed changes or reasons for voting "no":

Section G: Whenever the office of the President is vacant, the Vice-President shall assume that office temporarily. The membership shall at that time decide on the method of selecting a new President.

ARTICLE VI

Club meetings shall be held monthly at a time and place selected by the officers. Dates and places for these meetings shall be published in advance in Pittsburgh Fan Forum. Any changes such as the announcement of special or emergency meetings shall be made widely known to all resident members in advance. If this is not possible, then no fees shall be levied at such a meeting.

ARTICLE VII

Committees

Section A: The standing committees shall be the Membership Committee, the Convention Committee, and the Finance Committee.

Section B: The Membership Committee shall suggest and implement programs to increase club membership. It shall make known to the membership of any club member it feels is not fulfilling his obligations as set forth in ARTICLE IV.

Section C: The Convention Committee shall plan and conduct any conventions sponsored by the club, and shall organize club activities at other conventions. The President may divide this committee into subcommittees, and may, with the aid of the committee chairman, select subcommittee chairmen.

Section D: The Finance Committee shall review all club income and uses of club funds. The committee shall suggest and implement programs to increase club income . With the Sec.-Treasurer, the committee shall present a yearly financial report, showing sources of income, uses of club funds, and the like. This report shall be made at the August club meetings and shall cover the time period from the last report until the present, and shall be published in Pittsburgh Fan Forum. The committee shall investigate and report any mismanagement of club funds.

ARTICLE VIII

Finances

Section A: All uses of club funds exceeding one hundred and fifty dollars ($150) must be approved in writing by three officers, and/or the Chairman of the Finance Committee.

Section B: Any debt acquired by the club shall not be the responsibility of the membership as a whole or individually, or of the officers, unless such a debt occured through violation of the club constitution or any federal, state, or local law by an officer or other club member. In that case, the responsibility for the debt is limited to such person(s).

Comics and The Bicentennial

by Howard P. Siegel

"Congratulations, my son, America is proud of you," said Franklin D. Roosevelt in the last panel of the story. Shaking the hand of The Zebra in front of the American flag in the oval room of the White House, the nation's first citizen set the tone for all WWII comics. Every superhero had been drafted by circumstances of the time. The common objective was to keep this country free. Freedom and all that the red, white, and blue stood for were paramount. If it was not 1944, it could have been 1976. It could have been a schmaltzie rendition of the overcommercialized bicentennial celebration. Luckily, the frenzy hasn't affected comic books as much as it has other areas. After all, we've been fightong for the American cause since Scortchy Smith flew with the Russians and Terry plagued the Japs before the United States entered the war. On that basis, let's call up some of the starred and striped heroes from limbo, and use them to celebrate the year. They've always been readily alert, so it's not a matter of awaking a slightly balding, middle aged family man who last dove off a building onto a Nazi tank too long ago to remember. Our roster is still young, agile, muscular, and magnificent looking in their multicolored costumes.

The Fighting Yank, replete with tricorner hat, will pair off with the Spirit of 76 (sword well sheathed thank you) and Major Liberty (with unfluffed scarf) to lead the parade. After all, our nation was born in the year their costumes depict. Captain Fearless, Buckskin, and Tomahawk will follow, for they lead the way into our country's growth westward. If they should run into Rip Hunter or The Atom, we'll know that they've been time traveling back to the early 1800's. Was that Magicman disguised as John Paul Jones? The North had one of Citizen Smith's ancestors on their side while the South could claim the youngster who would one day return home to his hidden lair in Africa to become the 14th Phantom. Out west, the Golden Arrow, Lone Ranger, and Super Chief did their thing. Surely The Man In Black Called Fate had a hand in making the charge up San Juan Hill a success. And what about the likes of the Phantom Eagle and some of the senior citizens of the Death Patrol? Von Richtofen would have succeeded had they not been roaming the skies in their souped up Spads and Bleirots. War Eagle was at work long before Man O' War and Americommando. Then we come to an alphabetical array of heroes, each resplendent in a number of white stars, red stripes, or blue leotards. The American Eagle, The Boy Heroes, Captain America, The Defender, The Eagle, The Flag, The Girl Commandos, Liberty Belle, Man O' War, Paul Revere Jr., The Stars and Stripes, Captain Terror, Uncle Sam, Miss Victory, Lone Warrior, Yank & Doodle, and many, many more.

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Neil Renton's

The Comic Poll

I've returned to haunt you in my never ending struggle to find out how you rate recent comics. You list comic books that you've read within the last month or so, and rate them on a scale of 1 to 10 (10 high) and I compile the scores and report my findings here in this column. Some of the findings this month prove quite interesting.

Here are results of how club members feel about comics of the past two months (listed by average rating, title, issue number, and number of raters):

9.6 WARLOCK #13 (5)
9.5 MARVEL PRESENTS #6 (2)
9.0 HOWARD THE DUCK #5 (6)
8.7 HOWARD THE DUCK #4 (10)
THE SPIRIT #14 (3)
8.5 X-MEN #100 (6)
DAREDEVIL #137 (3)
8.2 EERIE #76 (2)
OMEGA #4 (2)
WARLOCK #14 (6)
8.0 DRACULA #47 (3)
ETERNALS #2 (3)
ALL STAR #62 (2)
KULL #16 (2)
MARVEL PREMIERE #31 (2)
S.S. OF CONAN #12 (2)
7.8 AVENGERS #151 (5)
ETERNALS #1 (5)
TARZAN #251 (3)
7.7 DR. STRANGE #16 (3)
MASTER OF KUNG FU #43 (2)
THOR #250 (3)

Other top rated comics, only rated by one person each:

9.0 RAGMAN #1
FREAK BROTHERS #4
8.5 IRON FIST #7
8.0 DOC SAVAGE #5
MARVEL SPOTLIGHT #29
SPIDERMAN ANNUAL #10
SEC. SOC. OF SUPERVILLAINS #2

The most consistently rated book was CAPTAIN AMERICA #200, which received a 7 from all four readers who ranked it.

On the other hand, GREEN LANTERN/ GREEN ARROW #90 got both 0's and 10's from among its ten reviewers, winding up with a respectable 6.7 average.

As for the question on the last poll, "Which comic book company do you prefer," sixteeen answered Marvel, two said Nati nal, and shop proprietor Greg Eide answered EC. Reasons for the choices included superior editorial handling and better continuity along with the usual preference of artists and writers.

When asked in the May poll, "What comic book title from the past would you most like to see revived?" members said:

SILVER SURFER (9)
MAN-THING (2)
THE SHADOW (2)
SHIELD (1)
WAR IS HELL (1)
AMERICA'S BEST (1)
X-MEN (1) (the "real" or "old" ones)

To those who participate each month in the poll, thanks again. As always, I hand out ballots at each meeting for you to fill out and return. Come next month with good memory of comics you've read!

If anyone has suggestions for the additional question in the poll, please offer. As always, you're comments are appreciated. Send them (with your ratings if you can't attend club meetings) to me,

Neil Renton, Jr.
2616 Lindenwood Dr.
Upper St. Clair, Pa. 15241

Till next time, may your newsstand always carry the comics you want!

* * *

Now to digress for a moment. I had been doing some work at this time for a nice zine called (why not?) Fan Informer. Remember, this is late 1974 or early 1975 we're talking about. The guy who edited the zine was named Arv Jones. He had some friends named Keith Pollard, Aubrey Bradford, Jim Starlin, Al Milgrom, and Rich Buckler, along with a brother Des, who made his fortune as a letterer. Anyway, by some fluke, I'd been assigned a strip of my own creation, a science-fiction thing called (are you ready for this?) "Nimbus."

Think about it for a moment. Conjure up some images.

NIMBUS! Storm clouds on the horizon! Sparks of lightning! Thunderous, rumbling, powerful, destructive forces! Crashing black waves on the Pacific palisades! Nimbus!

Ok, so far, so good.

In between all this, I made acquaintance with author Don McGregor, a friendship that continues to this day. I always held he was the best writer in comics (if perhaps not the best comics writer-- understand?) and I guess a little hero-worship's good for anyone. He'd just done an interview with England's illustrious Comic Media, and excellent zine, and his strips at Marvel had been receiving good reviews. For one reason or another, Don had agreed to collaborate on a Black Panther article, even though at that time we had no place to publish it.

Also, I'd been corresponding on and off with the Gillis brothers, of Marvel western fame, but we'll get back to that.

Early in 1975, everything seemed to lead to one inescapably evident conclusion-- I wrote to Paul Kowtiuk and told him "Sure I'll edit that zine for you. It'll be called 'Nimbus' and Don McGregor is working on an article for us and Dvae Fryxell (a fellow faned/friend) is doing another and it will be a regularly published tabloid zine." I made the point that in all of fandom, there simply did not exist the kind of zine I and a lot of other people wanted and needed to see, a zine that would concentrate on the articles first and foremost, with serious critique, serious research, printing nothing but top-quality, professional calibre writing, and impeccably edited (immodest as that may sound in a minute) package.

Paul, bless his heart, sent me the address of some artists; meanwhile, I contacted Pete and Rob Gillis about a lengthy, authoritative article on the western genre in comics. Don and I did our article, Dvae did a (thankfully) controversial column, and we were rolling. Frank Cirocco agreed to do a front cover, Don sent me a fantastic Gil Kane back cover (one reviewer stated "a back cover you'd have to see to believe!") and all of a sudden, everything came to a standstill.

Bam!

I had to stop and ask myself what Paul and I were doing. Who were we helping, except possibly ourselves monetarily (that was a worry?!) ? No one had an answer. If you are a creative artist in the process of creation, the creation is rendered totally meaningless if it is of no use to anyone except the creator. I saw that happening, and intended to curb it. But how?

Somewhere along the line, it hit me. To implement my idea, I first had to find a way to convince people I was on the level. Recalling that Aubrey Bradford and I had done that strip named Nimbus for Fan Informer, I ran off offset copies of the strip, and sent them with introductory/promo letters, to strictly fan artists. We did get Steve Leialoha to help us through that method, and Tim Corrigan, and a very talented duo who should be going pro soon, Sam de la Rosa and Ric Cruz, but the purely fannish element was missing -- by being too slick, we could lose a lot of our potential audience.

Well, my idea didn't work brilliantly until after the first issue deadline, but by the second install-

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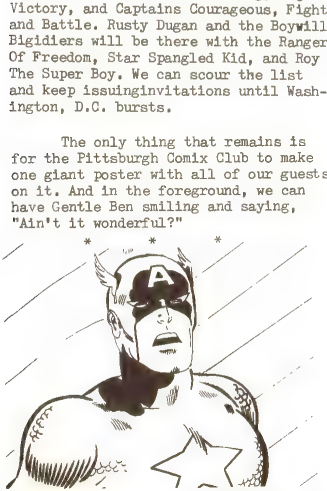
The Cold War, that period after the second great conflict when all super heroes were passe, saw Simon and Kirby stick to it with Fighting American. And then someone closed the tap. The flow stopped. There seemed to be no need in the '60's and '70's for a red hot American. In outer space and places where it didn't count, home fashioned patriotism became nondescript. So if we want to muster forces to celebrate the bicentennial, we have to call upon yesterday's people. And that's the way it should be.

Our game can be played unilaterally. We have no need for adversaries. The Captains Nippon, Nazi and Jap, Baron Gestapo, Red Skull and company may stay put. So too may the Blue and Gray, cowboys and Indians and Skraggs and Yokums. We aren't fighting. We're inviting only nice families like Yankee Girl, Yankee Boy, Yankee Doodle Jones, Miss Victory, V-Man, Captain Victory, The Liberty Lads, Miss Liberty, Liberty Belle, Captain Liberty, the Eagle, American Eagle, War Eagle, the Patriot, Pat Patriot, The Flag, Captain Flag, Flag Man, and some servicement like Private Strong, Major Victory, and Captains Courageous, Fight, and Battle. Rusty Dugan and the Boywille Bigidiers will be there with the Rangers Of Freedom, Star Spangled Kid, and Roy The Super Boy. We can scour the list and keep issuinginvitations until Washington, D.C. bursts.

The only thing that remains is for the Pittsburgh Comix Club to make one giant poster with all of our guests on it. And in the foreground, we can have Gentle Ben smiling and saying, "Ain't it wonderful?"

* * *



Birth Of A Fanzine, or,
"How to become famous and successful while going utterly bankrupt"
by Frank Lovece

The story you are about to hear is true. I put out a fanzine.

That, in a nutshell, is the problem...

What's that, you say? You, too, want to learn how to go about creating your own fanzine? I'll tell you what I know, but beware-- the road is fraught with constant danger. How can a third-rate letterjack from Morgantown, with a little help from his friends, some sneaky promos, and having a knack for this sort of thing, be able to put out a critically-acclaimed-through-financially-blaaaah fanzine, garnish a few votes in the fan awards, and lose a lot of money in-between? You ready for this?

Once upon a time, in that mystical, mirthful land known as Canada, there was a newspaper type fanzine circulating by name of The Journal. Paul Kowtiuk, the editor, managed to do quite a bit with what he had, but for the few years spanned by TJ, a situation arose not unlike that of the World Football League. The WFL was smashed by the NFL; likewise, TJ was commercially unable to compete with Alan Light's The Buyer's Guide. As a result, Paul turned TJ into a standard article/art type zine, one of pretty fannish quality (don't get me wrong-- I'm not plugging for an exclusive market for Phase, Comic Crusader, et al, but some of his stuff was downright awful). Apparently, more than just my criticisms worked their way to Paul, (maybe I should mention that I contributed to the zine) and, seeing as how we'd been corresponding for a while and understood eachother, Paul said something to the effect of "Thanks for the positive criticism and such, and if you can do better, I'm willing to give you a hand."

Well! No flies on me! I had a list of prospective contributors and ideas on his desk before morning (no small trick when it takes mail five days to get to Ontario)!

continued

Finally, Paul and I agreed to give it one more go, with hopes and many fears. Naturally, the Canadian postal workers went on strike, and Paul and I were going, going, gone, lost, misplaced, up the creek, sailing on that dark and lonesome highway toward the tomorrow we'd never know nor care about.

No! Paul and I were not going to let that happen!

So, as Peter Fonda did when no one would finance Easy Rider and forced the actor/producer to borrow against his own trust fund and put the movie out anyway, gaining fame and fortune with a Cannes Film Festival Award winner, I decided to publish Nimbus #2 here in the States, at my own expense.

Unfortunately, we made a mistake Peter Fonda did not. Easy Rider was made out of necessity on $40,000, which is almost nothing when you're talking about movie production. We went all the way with Nimbus, soaking an awful lot of money into a labor of love.

End result? We've sold, so far, much better than most other fanzines on the market, but we're not near recouping our loss. It's hilarious considering we have had nothing but great reviews, too.

So, there you have it. The whole sordid saga. I hope any aspiring faneds out there can use some of the information I've given them and can avoid our own pratfalls and pitfalls. Anyone else can merely nod his head and say, "Uh, huh, see?"

So sad, really....I've been editing Nimbus #3 with the intention of putting it out-- which we will someday, the gods willing-- and when you see the works of some incredibly talented fans, and by people like Bill Wilson, Tony Isabella, Steve Leialoha, Frank McLaughlin, Mike Grell, Bruce Patterson, John Byrne and Duffy Vohland, to name a few, you get wistful....

But it was fun while we were there!

* * *

"ALL AROUND"

column by Ben Pondexter

July Con Moments:

I love cons-- I'm not sure that I haven a good reason, though, and anyhting that gets you out of bed at nine in the morning can't be all god. But I do love cons; I only wish I had con energy for a regular work. week *** Judy Rosenbaum made my day by telling me she thought my Elasticworm costume was lovely. Thank you pretty lady! *** Heard at the con that the projected Superman movie might

continued next page

ment of our zine, we'd managed to corral a whole group of talented, promising fans, justifying my indications. I was so sure things would work out-- a delicate balance of fan and pro/slick contributions-- and in fact we did have a couple of complete newcomers to the field in our first issue, that I went ahead in our premiere editorial with a claim that we've subsequently lived up to: Nimbus would establish itself as the Apple Records of comics fandom. Simply put, we've got our "Beatles" (McGregor, Cirocco, Leialoha) and still give well-deserved chances to the noivces, the "Jackie Lomax's," "Badfingers" and "James Taylors's" (fans like Karl Kesel, Hoy Murphy, Steve Saffel, Mac Patterson, Bob Cotter, War Farrior and others you haven't heard of, but will). What can I say? It worka.

Things were rolling along pretty well now. All the articles and most of the artwork came in, and we had a first issue that garnered accolades all over the place, a big hit at the 1975 July Con in New York. But-- and there's the ever-elusive "however" again-- the first issue sold poorly in that recessive summer, and it looked like we were going to have to fold up the tent. Paul had put a lot of money and effort, I had put a lot of money and effort, we alreday had issue #2's logo and cover, done by friends at FI (for which I'm still grateful) and a lot of very good art came in, with an interview of Don McGregor. An overall lot of things were happening...Nick Cuti, Duffy Vohland, John Byrne, Mike Friedrich...so many!

One secret I must herewith divulge is the story of our covers. See, gathering the front covers of Nimbus #1 and #2 and the back cover of #2 was a point long thought out. I had to throw out a couple of ideas for the back cover of issue #2, though, so I was pretty much stuck with a blank page. Still, things have a knack of working out if the pieces have already fallen into neatly-ordered sets; I leaned back to see ehat would happen.

I made a trip to Fun City itself on a family matter, and took the time out to visit a few good people: Mark Gasper, Don McGregor, and Duffy Vohland (aside to Arv and Keith-- you guys were out when I first called!). Mark and I went to see some other good folk up in Brooklyn and after a while Duffy and I got to talking about Nimbus, and I mentioned in passing that I had no back cover. All of a sudden, Duffy whipped out some of his personal collection, saying "Here, borrow what you need." Uh huh! Duffy, my thanks. We ended up using a Pollard/Vohland for Nimbus #2.

Unfortunately, we were quite broke.

Paul and I, then, had to face a great decision. Should we put out a second issue, which would be even better than the first, and risk and all-or-nothing gamble? Or should we just let everything die, withered on the branches of despairing economic ruin for a noble project? It was a tough one, folks, when we're talking several hundred dollars.

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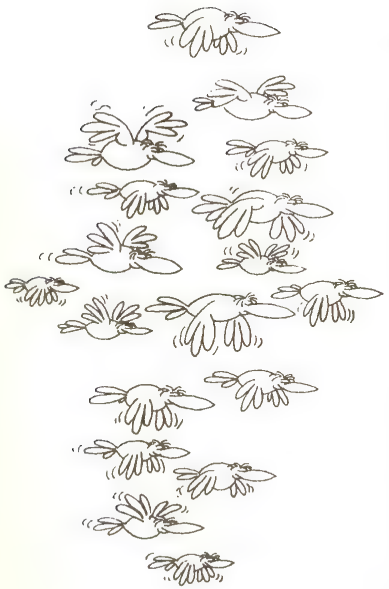


Mordillo

by Tom Hegeman

We often think of humor, especially visual humor such as cartoons, as having certain nationalistic characteristics. We know that a Frenchman, an Englishman, and an American more often than not wouldn't find the same cartoons amusing. Books, treatises, and innumerable introductions to cartoon anthologies have been written on the subject. Therefore, it is a little unusual (and a distinct pleasure) to find somebody like Guillermo Mordillo whose cartoons seem to be universally funny, knowing no national nor cultural boundaries.

Mordillo was born in Argentina in 1932. As a boy, he became enamoured with humorous drawings, cartoons, and animated films. He kept up a regular correspondence with the major American studios, including Disney, who sent him pencils sketches of characters and stills from various films. By 1960, he had come to New York where he worked for Paramount studios as an inbetweener for Popeye films. He also worked for Oz greeting cards having previously worked for the Hallmark affiliate in Lima, Peru.

In 1963, he left for Europe. Originally bound for England, by fate, Mordillo ended up in Paris where he has lived since then. For a while, he worked on greeting cards but left over financial matters. He has since then worked for Lui, Match, Elle and other magazines and has had his work reprinted on posters (in beautiful color, I might add).

Mordillo admits to a large cinematic influence (in Argentina, he worked on animated cartoons, as he later did in New York). He has stated that any of his cartoons can be turned into animated films, since all are, in fact, storyboards.

The two comedians he admires most, not surprisingly, are Buster Keaton and Charlie Chaplin. There is a universal quality in Mordillo's art

continued

be shot in Paris. For some reason, the idea doesn't strike me well. *** Some of the PCC (me, Mark Lerer, and Frank Rizzo) were the guests of Mr. and Mrs. Howard Bender! We understand we were the couple's first dinner guests in their new apartment! Joining us later in the evening were neighbors Len and Glynis Wein for a rolicking game of Monopoly. Naturally, a good time was had by all! *** A new Carl Barks original painting, "July Fourth In Duckburg," went for seven thousand dollars-- it was a real beauty. Just in passing, Russ Cochran is a great guy. *** The Marvel softball team was defeated the first day of the con by our own group of atheletes, by a score of 14-12! I heard rumors of demaning a rematch and that next year they'd play their first string team. Take note! *** Charlie Smail-- it would still be a good idea for you to come up on the last two days of the convention. Think what we could buy, especially if we saved some money. *** More compliments for my Elasticworm costume received at the club table, when an anonymous fan told me "The fans loved you." Love that kind of talk, just love it....*** Through the eyes of the Pittsburgh Comix Club, this was a good July 4 Comic Art Convention. All the PCC'ers did more than they had to and worked together very well even when things didn't go as planned...the only problem is, I'm sure that things didn't go as well as they did because of the con itself. As we plan for next year, we're going to have to do some hard thinking about the July Con and whether we attend or not. But this year's was a good comics time because we made it so. Walk a little taller, PCC-- you have the right to be proud.

Future notes: next year at either the July Con or PITTCON '77, we'd like to attend the costume parades as the JLA and/or the JSA. Already lined up are Powergirl, the Golden Age Green Lantern, Dr. Midnight, Green Arrow, the Atom, with special appearances by Solomon Grundy , the Hunter, and the Sportmistress. Cet in on the fun-- let me know if you'd like to participate, and as whom. We'll be having a special costume consultant next year to help out all around.*** The Shadow books hold up very well. They are almost timeless, and really good adventure. *** I confess! "Mary Hartman" has me hooked! When the show is funny, it still manages to touch a nerve here and there. But then, soap operas tend to enchant me.*** We're expanding FFF production staff again! Let me know....

* * *

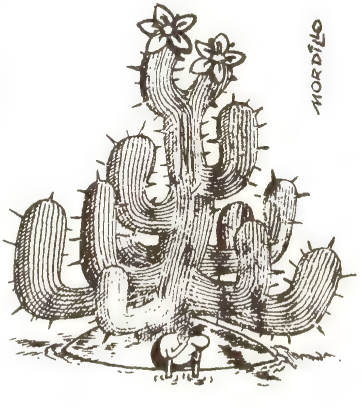
similar to that of Chaplin, shaking whose hand is one of Mordillo's favorite memories.

So much for biography. Now, what makes his cartoons so universally funny? The principle reason has to be simplicity.

Mordillo's drawings are not cluttered. He eliminates all that is unnecessary. By the same token, he will include in the drawing every building in a city or every branch and leaf in a jungle if the joke requires it. His characters are simple, too. Generally, they consist of one man and one woman, varying only when the joke requires more people. The two are universal, and wear clothes only if absolutely necessary. Often, Modillo sticks them on a deserted island or in the jungle-- beyond nations, as it were.

And what do these people do? They try hard but never quite succeed. They are really quite ingenuous but never successful. Something invariably goes wrong with very simple things, like swinging on a vine over to the other branch of a tree, or watering the only plant on a desert isle.

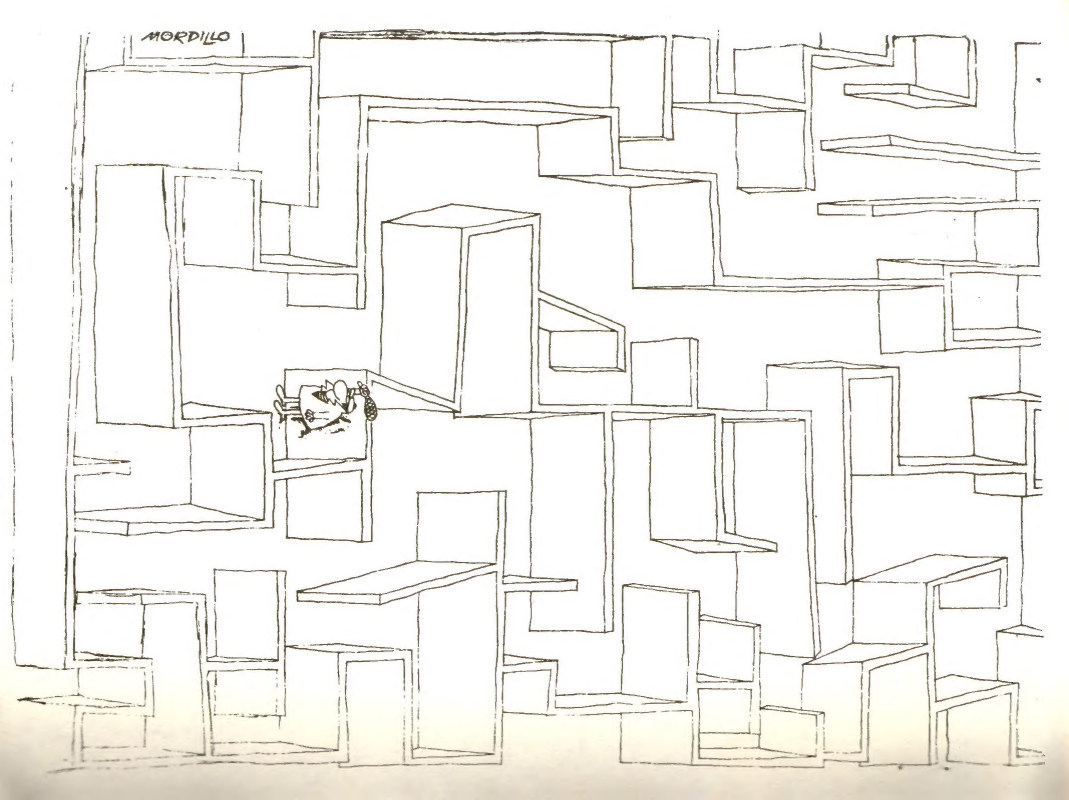
Often times, Mordillo combines this theme with the absurd, such as the mugger who stands in the center of a vast maze. Or the two men building a brick wall-- one lays bricks on top while the other paints the little lines in on the bottom. Many of Modillo's cartoons warp size and proportion as with the giraffe who catches his neck on the moon, or the little man who picks a flower only to have the earth deflate.



All this and more-- apparently very simple, actually complex upon examination. But always funny.

For those who would like to sample more of Guillermo Mordillo's work, scrounge around for The Collected Cartoons of Mordillo, published in 1971 by Crown. Or go to Paris, where one can't turn around without bumping into things he's done. Obviously, the French know a good thing when they see it.

* * *


MORDILLO

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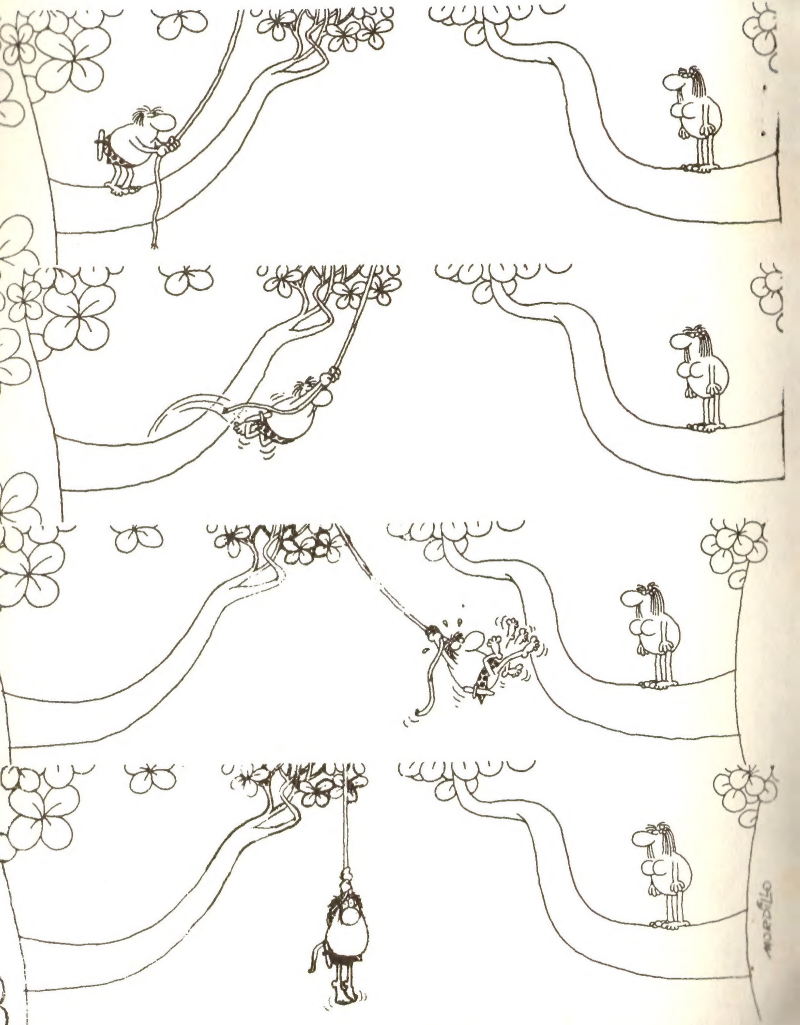

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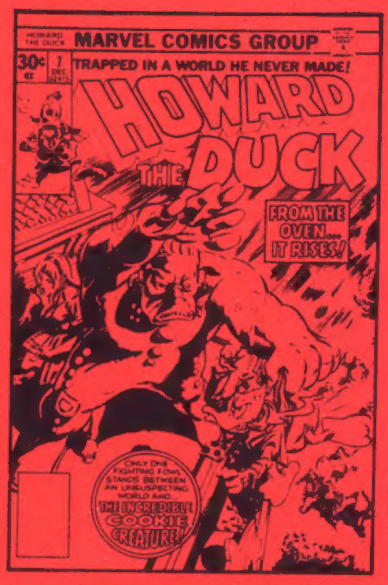

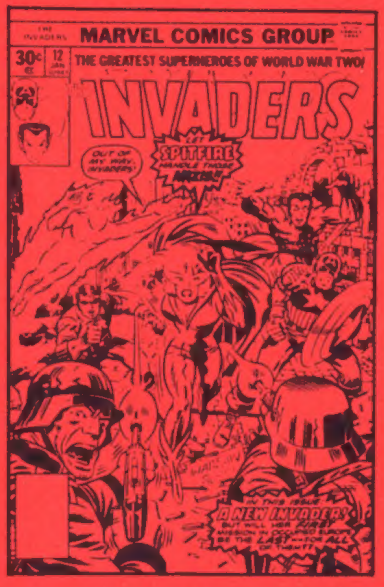

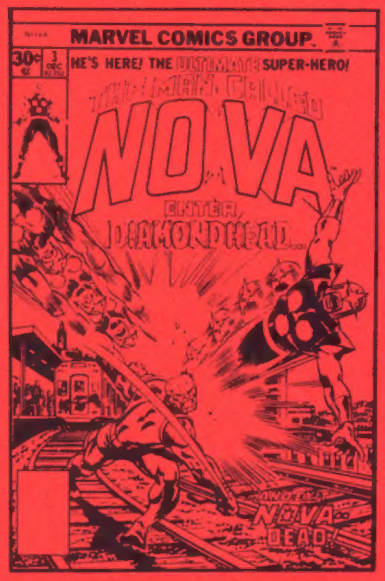

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